(d) by when the telephone connection registered against demand note No. DB-607 (Application No. A-2782) issued on 6th August, 1996 is likely to be installed; and

(e) by when the waiting list is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) to (c) Out of the total waiting list of 1955 of General Categogry as on 28.2.97 in the steel city of Rourkela, 1064 connections have since been provided. The remaining waiting list of 891 could not be cleared since only 1000 line expansion could be completed instead of 2000 lines proposed for RLU Exchange, Rourkela Township

(d) This telephone connection is likely to be installed by end of October 1997.

(e) The remaining waiting list is likely to be cleared progressive by June, 1998 subject to availability of equipment and stores.

Basic communication facilities in rural areas of Maharashtra

2349 PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed alongwith the time frame for providing basic communication facilities to all the villages in Maharashtra;

(b) whether technology developed by C-DOT has been helpful in providing cheaper communication facilities in rural areas of the State;

(c) if so, the details thereof, and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Out of 40023 villages in Maharashtra, 27420 villages have already been provided with telecom facility. The remaining villages are planned to be provided with basic communication facilities during the IXth Plan.

(b) to (d) Technology developed by C—DOT comprising of 128 to 1400 line exchanges has been found to be very suitable for modernising the telecom facilities in rural areas of the country. C-DOT exchanges upto 256 lines do not require Air Condivioned environment.

Multiple providers in internet services

2350. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD. Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether representations have been received for ending the monopoly of the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited of the Department of Telecommunications in Internet access and services to permit multiple providers for more competitive service;

(b) if so, the main points made by the representationists and the action taken thereon; and

(c) the comparative position obtaining in countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Korea, etc. in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Some representations have been received seeking permission/licence to operate Internet Service Provider as also proposing to end monopoly of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. Proposal regarding opening of Internet Service provision by Indian registered companies is under consideration of the Government